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ABSTRACT

The idea that breaks from experience are necessary and salutary in teacher education is a response to an enduring problem of teacher education: the fact that aspiring teachers come to their preparation with set ideas about teaching, learning, and schooling that fit with the larger ideal and institutional order into which they were born. Typically, the pedagogy and school learning aspiring teachers are well versed in is not the sort that teacher educators want them to promote, and novices' understanding of children is limited, based on their own experiences. This paper examines the justifications for breaking with experience that center, first, on the limitations of what teachers learn about their work through their experience of schools and, second, on comparisons of teacher learning with socialization processes in other professions. In assessing the call for breaks in experience in teacher education, comparisons of teaching with other professions ignore the extent to which teaching is a general human activity, and thus close to common sense. Not all that is learned through experience is without value, and neither are replacements for the lessons of experience necessarily available or teachable. (Author/JD)

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Abstract

The idea that breaks from experience are necessary and salutary in teacher education is a response to an enduring problem of teacher education: the fact that aspiring teachers come to their preparation with set ideas about teaching, learning, and schooling that fit with the larger ideal and institutional order into which they were born. Typically, the pedagogy and school learning aspiring teachers are well versed in is not the sort that teacher educators want them to promote, and novices' understanding of children is limited, based on their own experiences and habitual interpretations. This paper examines the justifications for breaking with experience that center on, first, the limitations of what teachers learn about their work through their experience of schooling and, second, on comparisons of teacher learning with socialization processes in other professions. Becoming a doctor, nurse, or lawyer appears to involve belief reversals and emotionally charged transformations that separate professional knowledge from common sense and preprofessional learning. In assessing the call for breaks with experience in teacher education, problems of principle and practice are, however, entangled with one another. On the one hand, comparisons of teaching with other professions ignore the extent to which teaching is a general human activity, and thus close to common sense. On the other hand, not all that is learned through experience is without value, and neither are replacements for the lessons of experience necessarily available or, for that matter, teachable, given the limited time and resources for educating teachers.

BREAKING FROM EXPERIENCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION: WHEN IS IT NECESSARY, HOW IS IT POSSIBLE?[1]

Margret Buchmann[2]

> One gets one's various plans of life suggested through the models that are set before each one of us by his fellows. Plans of life first come to us in connection with our endless imitative activities. These imitative processes begin in our infancy, and run on through our whole life. . . . Social activities are the ones that first tend to organize all of our instincts, to give unity to our passions and impulses, to transform our natural chaos of desires into some sort of order--usually, indeed, a very imperfect order. (Royce, 1908/1969, p. 867)

This paper addresses an enduring problem of teacher education, the fact that aspiring teachers come to their preparation with set ideas about teaching, learning, and schooling that fit with the larger ideal and institutional order into which they were born. How can one educate people about what they are already familiar with? Structures which uphold their world seem necessary and inconsequential to people incapable of grasping those structures. The "familiarity pitfall" (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985) not only limits the perceptions of teacher candidates but affects researchers' capacity for noticing things as well. As a pioneer of sociological, qualitative research, Howard Becker (cited in Wax & Wax, 1971) wrote:

> We may have understated a little the difficulty of observing contemporary classrooms. It is not just the survey method of educational testing or any of those things that keeps people from seeing what is going on. I think instead that it is first and foremost a matter of it all being so familiar that it becomes impossible to single out events that occur in the classroom as things that have occurred, even when they happen right in front of you. I have not had the experience of observing in elementary and high school classrooms myself, but I have in

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[1]This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 1989, San Francisco; also adapted for presentation as an invited address at the international conference on Improving Education by Improving Teacher Education, June 1989, Zurich, Switzerland.

[2]Margret Buchmann is coordinator of the Conceptual Analysis of Teaching Project and professor of teacher education at Michigan State University.

> college classrooms and it takes a tremendous effort of will and imagination to stop seeing the things that are conventionally "there" to be seen. I have talked to a couple of teams of research people who have sat around in classrooms trying to observe and it is like pulling teeth to get them to see or write anything beyond what "everyone" knows. (p. 10)

Years spent in classrooms, watching teachers and being pupils, contribute to prospective teachers' assumptions about teaching and learning and shape their understandings of children and subject matter according to recognizable patterns--patterns which participants may see without finding them remarkable enough to take notice of them. Typically, the pedagogy and school learning they are well versed in is not the sort that teacher educators want teachers to promote, and novices' understanding of children is limited, based on their own experiences and habitual interpretations. The difficult curriculum question is just what teacher educators should substitute for well ingrained learnings that appear altogether "real" and how they should go about a task amounting to conversion.

Good Deweyans, of course, would advise the teachers of teachers to look for experiences of their students that lend themselves as foundations for bridges to new understandings. Yet scholars have begun to question the "continuity principle" in curriculum and learning or the notion that desirable change always evolves in an unbroken chain out of past--preferably concrete, everyday--experience. They explore the idea that the preparation of teachers must sometimes go against the grain of ordinary experience or that it must induce "breaks" from what can be learned in the school of life (see e.g., Ball, 1989; Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1989; McDiarmid, 1989). The aim is to convert: to bring teachers-in-training over to specified new and better understandings from implicit prior beliefs regarded as false or in error, turning them--as they embrace the faith--from lay persons into professionals. From this perspective, breaks from experience are causal factors in people's changing from sinfulness

and the ways of the world to secular varieties of truth and the pursuit of holiness. In what follows, I will examine the corollary assumption that learning to teach requires instructive interruptions of the natural order and a decided alteration of teachers' minds, in the hope that teachers can make penetrating ideals of knowledge and justice felt in their work.

Questioning the Question

In doing their job, philosophers rarely give straightforward answers. Instead, they question people's questions, ask for clarification, point out inconsistencies, or paint a problem with all its teeth. Let us therefore think about the phrase "breaking from experience" before turning to the specific questions I will address. What do we mean, and what do we mean to do, when we speak of "breaking from experience in teacher preparation"?

Experiences are the stuff of life and thought; people have and undergo experiences all the time: in riding a bicycle, having a fight, dreaming, or reading a paper. Breaks are, by contrast, extraordinary events that interrupt the flow of hours, thoughts, and deeds--suspending what is going on. Breaks can be pleasant or unpleasant, salutary or not, depending on what is being interrupted and what supplants it. Often, people pick up the threads of the pattern afterwards; indeed, in many cases breaks are part of a larger whole (e.g., the workday or week, musical compositions or performances, conversational or epistolary exchanges).

Breaking away <u>from</u> something suggests a deeper pattern disruption and a turning to something else. Gently nurtured Victorian females left their home comforts to nurse soldiers on some foreign battle field, or to explore the Himalayas. A child raised among the proverbial idle rich or laboring poor might turn to art as a vocation. Russian noblemen, and women, did break with the beliefs of their class and worked to overturn the social order. Or,

concerning a more general human experience, there was a movie not too long ago titled Breaking Away; it dealt with adolescence and the stormy processes of maturation and individuation in terms that were not abstract at all.

In each of these examples, an implication is that what people break with seems less desirable than what they turn to, usually in the face of opposition or other difficulties. Actually, the justification for breaks of this sort, typically painful, is to be found in the different and superior states or characteristics that are supposed to ensue. Thus, "breaking with something" is associated with worthwhile change: the getting of knowledge, wisdom, a kinder heart, an independent spirit, or the advancement of a more just social order.

Whatever people are turning to, however, in breaking with prior experience, they cannot escape experience. Rather, they move from one realm of experience, conceptually and practically organized (in a manner rather mysterious) to another realm with a different organization. People usually think of this movement as learning; and part of it stems from seeing the past differently, in the light of other ideas--sometimes revolutionary, sometimes as old as Ecclesiastes. Hence, experience is often not so much overcome as transformed, and what happens to people, though consequential, can be less important than what they end up doing with it through secondary, "brain-born" learnings.

There is furthermore the tricky question of what is "typical" or "ordinary." Life is lived from the inside. A 14-year-old embroiled in fights about curfew time will not write off her anger as "typical" until many years later. Falling in love is not uncommon but hardly an ordinary event to a person. To an observer, it may be amusing to watch the same actions performed by different people, each behaving as if he or she were doing something never done before. Yet experiences acquire pale typicality seen from the outside, through a decentered view out of touch with many things that matter (Nagel, 1979).

Do breaks from experience allow people some return to what was previously experienced as natural? Can valuable aspects of a pattern be protected while others are being replaced? These are questions of some moment, for not everything left behind will be bad in all aspects: whether it is innocence, stability, or home life at the parsonage and other varieties of belonging. In putting an ideal order in place, one must consider not only the goods one is confident of producing but also possibilities of loss and harm.

At any rate, people, and I have to include myself here (see Floden, Buchmann, & Schwille, 1987), do not literally mean what they say when they speak of breaking from (or with) experience. That we manage to communicate something in calling for breaks with experience in teacher preparation is due to the fact that the phrase calls up a number of assumptions concerning more or less desirable conceptual and practical organizations of systematically different kinds of experiences in teacher learning; these assumptions bear on teachers, schools, pupils, and teaching subjects and are divided along the lines of the given and some other world view. In shorthand fashion, the image of "breaks" conveys the message that drastic measures are needed to cross the borderline.

What May Justify Breaks From Experience in Teacher Preparation?

Several lines of argument surround and support these assumptions. One can argue, at the most general level, that teacher preparation requires instructive interruptions of the natural order because of the adaptive power of many experiences people undergo, experiences that attach one to a given appearing "too true" to warrant discussion, let alone revolution (see, e.g., Buchmann & Schwille, 1983). People find it difficult to extricate themselves from constitutive patterns, conceptually or practically. However, while the basic existential criteria of a culture are taken for granted, if <u>all</u> experiences were

numbing to one's mind and spirit, people would still be crouching around fires in caves--if that.

Comparisons of teaching with other professions, in which people's transitions to their roles tend to be marked by emotionally charged transformations and belief reversals, yield a more specific justification for breaks from experience in teacher preparation. By definition, "expertise" seems discontinuous with preprofessional personal and commonsense knowledge. A particular application of the expertise argument turns on understandings of teaching subjects that can be certified either by the academic disciplines and conceptual structures, changing and unseen, or by the palpable perceptions of common sense and people's experience of schooling (which for most students extends far into university education), in which subjects are absorbed as given facts, rules, and procedures, or equated with the chapters of a text.

Another justification for breaks from experience stems from teachers' responsibility for the learning of many children divided from the teachers by culture, gender, class, or race. If it is the teacher's task to build "bridges of reasonableness" (Soltis, 1981) among different people in school, teachers must not only know their subjects flexibly (Buchmann, 1984); they must likewise suspend their self-centered and culturally warranted notions about how people act, talk, or feel, and be stirred to a perception of others that is just and kind (Buchmann, 1988).

However, the relations of teaching and common sense are complicated. Teaching and learning are shared human enterprises, neither the domain of experts nor limited to the institution of schooling. The sympathetic apprehension of other people is quite an accomplishment but not something only teachers are good at; ordinary folks and celebrated intellectuals may have, or be without, that capacity and the disposition to make it "tell" in particular cases.

Below I will give further thought to these arguments for breaks from experience in teacher preparation, occasionally playing the devil's advocate.

Does Experience Induce the Sleep of Reason?

With 10,000 hours of schooling in many countries, pupils learn more than the curriculum, hidden or explicit. They become acquainted with the ways of teachers and the workings of the place called school. Could an inmate of 10 years give a passable imitation of a prison warden? Could she guess shrewdly at how such functionaries think, even if prisoners do not usually attend staff orientation meetings, receive memorandums about building policies, or follow their wardens' debates of difficult cases? One must grant that pupils are likely to acquire such knowledge and know-how as well--by observing and by imagining, if with limited accuracy, what it is like to be the other, significant, and powerful person. Though they have the disadvantage of greater youth, they will have spent more time with a variety of teachers and other institutional functionaries.

Also, pupils are probably more wise to teaching because of its being a kind of people-work that is more interactive than keeping prisoners in line. Teachers are not like actors onstage producing a play from a given script, a play that is set in content, direction, and outcomes and merely requires an audience. School teaching is a coproduction with students participating on stage. They may be treated as minor cogs but are needed to keep the machinery going. Moreover, every long day, there are a great many students for each teacher.

Lectures, workbooks, recitations, and, in earlier times, plenty of dictation, are means that help teachers work around these unruly aspects of classroom life, keeping the pedagogue center stage and the class at bay. Being at the receiving end of such strategies gives students a thorough induction into

"teaching as usual." Perhaps a sixth grader may not be able say this clearly, but what typically happens in schools allows for some content coverage, some participation, and some group control by structuring who gets to say or do something, when, and--by and large--what.

In participants, these "folkways of teaching" (Buchmann, 1987) induce a directly felt fitness between things. They do not lend themselves well to teachers' uncovering the farther reaches of subject matter or student thinking, yet they meet some of the functional needs of school teaching. Educational reformers may not like to see it that way, but in the catalogue of known means to ends in teaching, which people absorb through schooling, we have the makings of a modest science: imperfect, partial in outlook, and technical in orientation (see Schwab, 1978). The drawback of this catalogue is that it takes means as permanent and ends that are not very thrilling for granted.

The power of these experiential learnings--many would say, mislearnings (see e.g., Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985; also, Zeichner, 1980, 1981-2)--derives both from their content and their mode and context of acquisition. The school knowledge students acquire fits with the tenets of common sense which fix attention on the palpably obvious in the how and what of teaching. To be sure, people need to know their number facts. But one can teach them as one has been taught; that is, by telling, and if necessary, repeated telling which, together with practice, is supposed to make facts sink into the mind. From a commonsense point of view, the concept of number is not in question; numbers <u>are</u>, just like lectures and workbooks, part of our world. These things are not unfamiliar but known--and thus they are perpetuated.

Subjected to typical teaching, many students learn something some of the time and become familiar, by acquaintance and participation, with the folkways of (school) teaching themselves. Their learning is reinforced by experience:

by the experience of success (if partial, intermittent and unevenly distributed--which is just what common sense would lead one to expect) and by the experience of participation, or the act and condition of taking part in school, with others (not occasionally but in a regular way, starting to be under the sway of teachers at quite an impressionable age).

Twice reinforced by experience, overshadowed by captivity, and shot through with imaginative identifications, school smarts are well entrenched. Participation, again, has two sides. It leads to automatic readings of situations--inducing habitual meanings and actions--and is itself a powerful test. In schooling, doing things alone or in concert with others shows what works and doesn't work, given limited, utilitarian ends, such as "getting done" or "getting it right." These ends are rarely examined because of being obliquely affirmed in institutional structures and patterns of classroom life, supported, for the most part, by common sense.

For teachers, who have to act, it stands to reason that they have to find quickly what works in the range of situations they are most likely to encounter, and learn to perform that work reliably and well. Among other things, they have to acquire techniques and habits of equable command, blending the "hard" with the "soft" sides of teaching, such as empathy and patience. It is

> the teacher's responsibility to coordinate, stimulate, and shepherd the immature workers in his charge. . . . Task and expressive leadership in classrooms must emanate from the teacher, who, it is presumed, corrects for the capriciousness of students with the steadiness, resolve, and sangfroid of one who governs. (Lortie, 1975, pp. 155-156)

Having a repertoire of concrete, cathected images of people with the requisite presence is a great help in that. The placid certainty of common sense inspires new teachers with a confidence they greatly need. Are these learnings completely without value? As I have already indicated, our answer should perhaps be somewhat cautious.

The Equivocal Benefits of Having Been Inside

For one thing, it would be good to remember that people always undervalue what they have never been without. Teacher educators are no exception. I wonder what nursing educators, for example, would say if their students knew as much about hospitals as our students know about schools. Many nurses come to their preparation believing that they will dispense personal, loving-kindness to the helpless (Davis, 1968); they have not had 10,000 hours of exposure to nurses, seeing them, in the words of one nurse, "calm, balanced, efficient, moving up and down the wards self-protected by . . . bright immunity from pity . . . merging [their] own individuality in the impersonal routine of the organization" (Brittain, 1980). Could an aspiring public defense lawyer picture a day between chambers and courts, or imagine the wiles of judges, witnesses, and other actors on the scene? Teacher educators, by contrast, can at least rely on their students' knowing schools as inmates (by participation, acquaintance, and imaginative identification: with the characteristic defects of these ways of knowing, sharpened by children's relative powerlessness in schools).

For another thing, acting and thinking within the system of common sense is not the same as being dead to reason. In their lighter moments, professional thinkers agree with the commonsense tenet that it is a good thing to keep things plain. As Freud said, sometimes a cigar is just a cigar. Fixated on the remote, people overlook the obvious and get into mystery mongering that is fruitless and passes over truths and benefits inherent to the given, which incorporates not only superstitions but hard-earned results of collective learning. Common sense has an outlook and style with appeal while avoiding some of the pitfalls of self-conscious thought.

The presumption of self-evidence inherent to common sense, however, is liable to choke off discussion, which--given change and human fallibility--is a high cost. Associated stylistic predilections for the mundane bias people and limit their receptivity. As William James (1891/1969) points out: "The moment you get beyond the coarser and more commonplace moral maxims, the Decalogues and Poor Richard's Almanacs, you fall into schemes and positions which to the eye of common-sense are fantastic and overstrained" (p. 171). To the extent that a good life requires loyalty to ideals (such as charity, truth, justice) entwined with loyalty to other people, these limits spell trouble. Josiah Royce (1908/1969), greatly admired by James, makes clear why that is so:

> Loyalty . . . is an idealizing of human life, a communion with invisible aspects of our social existence. Too great literalness in the interpretation of human relations is, therefore, a foe to the development of loyalty. If my neighbor is to me merely a creature of a day, who walks and eats and talks and buys and sells, I shall never learn to be loyal to his cause and to mine. (p. 958)

What throws another wrench into my half-hearted case for "teaching as usual" as professional preparation is that typical school practices and their assumptions do not always live up to common sense.

Most of us know that children are quite taken with the extraordinary--weird, enchanting, obscure, or violent--far removed, for instance, from the banalities of basal readers or the boring facts about "postal carriers" and "my town" presumably introducing children to their world in social studies. A great part of the vapidity of school learning can be chalked up to a tradition of research on word frequencies and on a confusion of the frequency with the importance of words in composing texts and learning to read. (Thorndike warned against this fallacy early on; see Clifford 1978.) Sometimes the obfuscation of natural understandings can be traced to research and its mistaken authority in education (i.e., the false belief that finding out things about the world can tell you what you ought to do).

The example of social studies highlights another source. As Brophy (1988) contends, the stability of the unadventurous "concentric" pattern of teaching as usual in social studies--family, neighborhood, hometown, state, and so on--can be explained by its capacity to adapt to all kinds of educational fads and contradictory policies that teachers must cope with. This shows how functional adaptivity may override ordinary good sense in institutional life.

Practitioners and theorists in teacher education assume rightly that things could be better than they are in schools. Indeed, this is just the soothingly obvious thing a person of common sense might say. What does not follow is that the folkways of teaching are untested, easily uprooted, or that they can be readily supplanted by something else that serves all the needs that must be met in the situation. No doubt teaching as usual is lacking--it can be lacking where it <u>is</u> common sense, and where it is <u>not</u>. Regardless of their merits in the abstract, however, new understandings offered to teachers have to match the <u>authority</u> of the lessons absorbed in experience: their impressiveness as well as their practicality or objective chances at success (allowing teachers to get some content across to some people some of the time, while keeping the class in order and coping with conflicting external pressures). As I have said elsewhere:

> If reform ideologies provide no means for subsistence, they will have no power as prescriptions and most people will stick or revert to the folkways of teaching without being subject to blame. Replacements for the given must somehow pick up the pieces of whatever else tumbles down, and supplements must be structurally fitting to function. Ignoring these requirements is not idealism but lack of seriousness. (Buchmann, 1987 p. 159)

There is no blinking at the fact that what we are trying to substitute for the lessons of experience in learning to teach is a mode of learning and knowing that most teachers are not familiar with and which they cannot grasp by their habitual modes of learning; that is, in addition to teaching, the

concepts of knowing and learning themselves are at issue in teacher preparation (see Schwab, 1978). In all of this, we need to take seriously the fact that consequential changes are often laborious and slow. "We know," as Cardinal Newmann (1852/1925) explained,

> not by a direct and simple vision, not at a glance, but, as it were, by piecemeal and accumulation, by a mental process, by going round an object, by the comparison, the combination, the mutual correction, the continual adaptation, of many partial notions, by the employment, concentration, and joint action of many faculties and exercises of mind. (p. 151)

And learning in this sense does not come by mere application, reading many books, witnessing experiments or attending lectures; one can do all these things and, still, "he may not realize what his mouth utters; he may not see with his mental eye what confronts him" (p. 152).

Given these considerations, one cannot be surprised that most reform projects in education turn sour or don't float, sometimes by muddling what is sound in common sense and practice through ideology and quasi-scientific dogma. My qualified defense of common sense, and grudging case for the folkways of teaching, throws doubts on the notion that learning to teach must include breaks with experience and that all such breaks will be salutary. The characteristic kinds of learning (both in mode and content) associated with schooling and common sense provide, at the same time, a justification for the forcible interruption of given beliefs and practices that I refer to, in brief, as breaks with experience in teacher preparation. For it is also true, to quote William James (1891/1969) again, that:

> All the higher, more penetrating ideals are revolutionary. They present themselves far less in the guise of the effects of past experience than in that of probable causes of future experience, factors to which the environment and the lessons it has so far taught must learn to bend. (p. 172)

From this perspective, the question is how to make such breaks effectively and turn them to good account in teachers' learning.

It takes more than a hint to stir a soul that is content to take things as they are; actually, it may take something rather prodigal--an amazing or marvellous thing, out of the ordinary course of nature. We are usually not ready to abandon the "natural attitude," which takes a given world for granted, "without having experienced a specific shock which compels us to break through the limits of this 'finite' province of meaning and to shift the accent of reality to another one" (Schutz, 1962).

Learners in some professions experience their socialization as a revolutionary change of world views: a separation from ordinary or lay perceptions, involving unexpected reversals and doctrinal conversions on the slow road to expertise and professional membership. Accordingly, a second line of argument for breaks with experience in teacher preparation draws on comparisons of teaching with other professions. In sorting out this argument, I will continue to address both problems of principle (Should we have breaks from experience in teacher education? Why might they be necessary?) and of practice (How are such breaks possible?).

Is Professional Learning Like Seeing the World in Reverse?

Fond of it or not, we are all amateurs of school knowledge. The question is how one can get from the glazed surface of things as they seem to the heights and depths of things as they might be in teaching. For purely structural reasons, some other professions appear to have advantages here.

People entering medical school are conveniently filled with a sense of their own ignorance. Their preprofessional learning does not usually include an induction into the common varieties of doctors' bedside manners and styles of interaction with patients in the office; aspiring doctors have to learn that, contrary to lay assumptions, the causes of illness are highly uncertain, a muddle of physical, environmental, and social-emotional factors, eddying

inward and outward (Fox, 1957). For nurses, patient care takes on a cerebral meaning that emphasizes objective thinking about health problems over charitable "doing": "The student is enjoined to view her own person as a purposeful instrument in the therapeutic process, not merely as some benignly disposed vehicle through whom preformulated nursing procedures and techniques are dispensed" (Davis, 1968, p. 241). Law students are taught "to think like lawyers," in specialized modes of stringent reasoning and case analysis (Bodenheimer, 1962; White, 1985); they learn to appreciate that, in law, it is the better case and not the better cause that wins.

These experiences remove the certainty of common sense, yet institute other kinds of assurance. For better or for worse, the education of doctors, nurses, and lawyers turns out people who differ from laypersons by what they know and care about; passing through the professional mirror, they have learned to see the world from behind it. I say "for worse," because sometimes we have reason to mind the distance of professionals from ordinary human concerns and wish to soften or reverse the effects of their too efficient socialization.

Converting Teachers

What many educators want for teachers parallels the transforming experiences of other professionals. They shrink from novices' eager affirmations of liking kids as a reason for going into teaching, aiming to substitute motivations that have to do with worthwhile learning, purposefully administered by the teacher. They are dissatisfied with their learners' plain views of teaching as doing, and the concomitant desire for procedures and techniques to follow, and wish to replace them by elaborated understandings of teaching and learning as thinking, with a focus on "why" rather than "how." All this implies a shift from observables, from habits and personal experiences, to inward activities and abstract ideas of the classroom as a scenario for an

introduction to the life of the mind, in which teachers stand for intellectual and civic virtues, and deliver them, too.

Educators want teachers to care about the human good of learning--as opposed to getting things done or getting things right--and about the equal distribution of that good, productive of other goods, moral and social. They want to change what Johnny learns in school and make sure that Antonio and Maria also get to wonder about infinity in mathematics and read poems that help them consider the human condition. Neither common experiences--in everyday life and school--nor ordinary ways of making sense and of looking at other people are a great help in preparing teachers for the pursuit of the ideals of knowledge, justice, and charity in schools.

Common sense tends to turn difference into inferiority, solidifying this penchant in stereotypes. Important disciplinary understandings having to do with uncertainty and historical transformations of knowledge never make it into school; understandings that <u>are</u> in the curriculum often conflict with people's everyday experience. In science,

> the image of a stationary earth is replaced by that of a stationary sun, iron dissolves into arrangements of electrons and protons, water is revealed to be a combination of gases and the concept of undulations in the air of various dimensions takes the place of images of sounds. (Oakeshott, 1962, pp. 212-213)

To build "bridges of reasonableness," teachers have to be "inside" their subjects, with a particular view toward what and how to teach in school. Teachers also have to recognize common ways of looking at other people for the distorting and hurtful habits of mind that they are and strive to overcome those habits in perceptions and actions related specifically to their work (e.g., deliberate patterns of teacher attention and discipline oriented toward equity; nonautomatic assumptions about which children will be interested in, or good at, what sorts of topics or work; conception and construction of a

classroom community that embodies respect for differences and encourages learning from them).

The shifts desired by many teachers of teachers are at least as dramatic as the separations, almost alienations, from the "real world" that other professionals undergo. They are argued on similar grounds, holding up an image of what is true and right in teachers' work against what Francis Bacon called the "false idols" of the tribe. Lortie (1975) might be addressing nurses when he says that "the self of the teacher, his very personality . . . must be used and disciplined as a tool necessary for achieving results and earning work gratification" (pp. 155-156). Work on the preparation of teachers for uncertainty echoes the concerns of medical educators (Floden & Clark, 1988). Teachers, for instance, do not really know what accounts for students' failures, and their ruminations can reach as far as the state of the world or stay as close as their own or their students' ideas and actions on a particular day.

One could argue that, just because future teachers have already been initiated into schooling (and are constantly having many extramural experiences of teaching and learning besides), their professional socialization must be even more of a turning point. This contention finds additional support in the fact that pupils--on whom a situational realization of higher ideals of knowledge, justice, and charity does, in part, depend--continue living outside of school. Are therefore ever-more complete conversions, more decided breaks with experience, required for teachers to "stand and deliver"?

Before it spirals out of control, I think that the "breaks" argument in professional education in general, and in teacher preparation in particular, needs to be tamed. It is only partially true for professional learning in general, for a separation from people's ordinary concerns institutionalized in professions can be carried too far and may become self-serving; and the argument has

limited applicability to teaching, which also poses problems of implementation that are awesome to contemplate.

Teachers' minds are slates, not blank but scratched in deeply, with plain characters. Can we replace the slates, rewrite the characters, or reverse their interpretation, as the concept of breaks suggests? Can we do this for all teaching subjects, all concepts, topics, and methods within them? Since universities do not reliably introduce their students to disciplinary understandings in physics and literature, should we perhaps be grateful that future teachers remember their school lessons--or can stick to common sense if all else fails? What about teaching methods? Understandings of children and learning? Conceptions of knowledge, the teaching role, classroom life, and so on?

The weight of experience alone, bearing downward in quality and quantity, makes effective breaks on all these counts seem unlikely. Yet, as I have argued, this weight cannot solely be seen as a dead hand which people must shake off in order to flourish. The experiences of future teachers--while not a reliable sample of either the real or the ideal world of teaching--include much that, deserving a skeptical, grudging respect, tends to be overlooked by the clever, by academics enamored of their fields (e.g., psychology or philosophy) or interested in schools mostly as mechanisms for social change (i.e., not as institutions serving primarily educational ends).

Teachers may be intellectual leaders, but they are social managers as well, shepherding youngsters down some meandering path with some purpose and kindness. Do they plan lessons? Reprimand and praise where appropriate and fair? Do teachers work at getting students to finish their assignments and themselves try to mark them on time? More subtly, do they put attention-seekers in their place while encouraging the timid? Of course, teachers do these and other things that students can see or figure out in a fashion.

Are ordinary understandings of knowledge as facts and names completely wrongheaded? Granted that thoughts may dissolve the world of everyday experience, chairs can still be sat upon, and holding on to that fact is important. Tribal cultures make a great many distinctions among things of no conceivable material use; yet, in giving names, people order the world and make its constituents visible (Geertz, 1975). The commonsense assumption that facts and names are essential for knowledge resonates with the empirical and conceptual pursuits of science, though falling short of their specific elaborations, especially in terms of methods and criteria of knowing. And one supposes that even Einstein rejoiced at getting things done and getting them right. While a preparation for teaching and knowing through schooling and common sense is therefore partial and far from perfect, it is still something, and it is there--in all its imponderable weight.

This leads to paradoxical conclusions. On the one hand, the weight of down-to- earth understandings in learning to teach makes breaks seem necessary, while probably impossible on all counts. On the other hand, the lessons of experience are not on all counts invalid or deceptive as a preparation for teaching.

This assessment throws doubt on the argument in support of breaks from experience in teacher education that derives from comparisons with other professions. If we order human pursuits on a continuum that marks their permeability to common sense and experience (i.e., nonparadigmatic and extraprofessional knowledge), teaching can be placed at the high end, radiology at the low, with the health professions and law somewhere in between. Degrees of relative permeability are not, in themselves, either good or bad, but must be judged by reference to a profession's particular responsibilities and epistemic situation. Words of warning addressed by Donald T. Campbell (1975) to his fellow

psychologists may deserve a hearing among teacher educators: "With our conceptual frameworks still heavily shared with popular culture, our narcissistic motivation for creative innovation overlaps into the motivation to advocate shocking new perspectives" (p. 1121).

Is There Expertise in Teaching, and Does it Matter?

In teaching, common sense and experience are often good enough to go on. This claim is consistent with recent empirical work on the nature of teaching expertise (see Carter, Sabers, Cushing, Pinnegar, & Berliner, 1987; also Berliner, 1986). In selecting and interpreting information about students, explaining their judgments and making instructional plans, a small sample of expert teachers used frames of reference and made arguments accessible to almost any person (Carter et al., 1987). They had beliefs about what seemed worth knowing in looking at an imaginary teaching situation or task and they saw more deeply than others. But what these "expert" teachers felt to be important fit comfortably with ordinary good sense, even where it led them to look below the surface (e.g., peering "inside" students' work to figure out how they think).

Expert teachers felt it important to take charge of a new classroom, laying down the laws for behavior and learning, and to find out "where kids are." Apparently, experience and plain thinking had made them wise to these things as well as to the "groupness" of teaching and the limits of test scores and (other) teachers' judgments as indicators of what children can do. While wasting no time on information they considered irrelevant, they made more of the facts at hand than either novices or postulants to teaching (i.e., individuals entering the profession without pedagogical training).

As it stands to reason, teaching novices and postulants were less sure of themselves and about what to expect; they had more difficulty in seizing on meaningful information and relating it to action. Thus they seemed more

"glued" to the surface of things. Still, experienced teaching professionals were hardly set apart from aspiring teachers or people on the street by any vital change of world view or specialized interpretive and moral codes.

Thus, expert teachers probably only do, in a more high-powered way, what people do for themselves and each other. Thinking, teaching, and learning are human birthrights:

> By birthright we are all not only thinkers but also singers and dancers, poets and painters, teachers and story-tellers. This means that the professional singer or painter, poet or teacher, dancer or story-teller, is a professional in a different way from the solicitor or doctor, physicist or statistician. . . . Like the runner or the writer or the ruler the thinker may become a professional but can never become an <u>expert</u>. (Bambrough, 1980, p. 60)

Calls for breaks with experience should not promote irrelevant notions of expertise in teaching: notions that, in particular, confound issues of knowledge and power by ascribing arcane knowledge to teachers, or promoting it in teacher education, in order to raise the status of the profession. Whether the intent is explicit or not, this is no way to improve the preparation of teachers.

Breaks with experience, like any idea in education, must be judged by the extent to which they can help all people come into their own in thinking, learning, and knowing, thus escaping the blind alleys of circumstance. We know that the role of schooling is dubious and contrary here: Institutions serve their own needs as well as their originating purposes, and there is no guarantee that functional requirements will not conflict with what seems to be the heart of the matter. We do not usually look to public mental institutions to promote people's sanity; most certainly, not to them <u>only</u>. So why should we be surprised that schooling is a kind of cousin twice-removed from education?

Institutional romantics might accordingly do well to lower their sights, being content if schools live up to the commonsense expectation that life is "one-third pleasure, one-third pain, and one-third blah" (Campbell, 1975,

p. 1121). However, people should raise their voices when that balance tilts further in the direction of pain and boredom, as is sadly the case for many American children in school today. Following Campbell's (1975) speculations, the extremity of the preached ideal might have its function in serving to overcome or compensate for the bias in that--its opposite and indefensible--direction.

Are breaks with experience necessary and possible in teacher preparation? My analyses imply that answers are hedged about with conceptual and practical difficulties. A less complimentary reading is that I am waffling or going back upon crucial aspects of my own arguments. What seems plain is that, in assessing the call for breaks with experience in teacher preparation, problems of principle and practice are entangled with one another. The question is not only, "How do you rub out or replace all that self-involved, preprofessional learning," but also, "What of it has some value and, besides, cannot be acquired elsewhere--either now or, possibly, ever?"

Teacher Education as Speculative Metaphysics?

Let me remark, in conclusion, that people attracted by the call for breaks with experience in teacher preparation seem to share some of the motivations of artists and scientists. In the words of Einstein:

> One of the strongest motives that lead men to attempt science is to escape from everyday life with its painful crudity and hopeless dreariness, from the fetters of one's own ever shifting desires. With this negative motive there goes a positive one. Man tries to make for himself, in the fashion that suits him best, a simplified and intelligible picture of the world. He then tries to some extent to substitute this cosmos of his for the world of experience and thus to overcome it. This is what the painter, the poet, the speculative philosopher, and the natural scientist do each in his own fashion. (cited in Singer, 1981, p. 40)

Inspired by such positive and negative motives, reformers in North-American teacher education currently take a rather confident, all-embracing attitude

toward progress in schools and education. In trying to overcome the cosmos of ordinary experience, they bank on science and academic knowledge, rejecting traditional conceptions of teaching, learning, and knowing as outdated. Involved in this attitude is a penchant for developing new cosmologies and no particular aversion to adopting beliefs that seem strange and unearthly to ordinary people.

Yet what may be new in teacher education is quite old in philosophy, which has, in one of its veins, a long tradition of fondness for ambitious metaphysics. This tradition is expressed in grand systems, from Parmenides to Plato, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Hegel--all of them thinkers confident of making progress in unraveling the mysteries of the world, and none of them hesitant to posit views surprising to common sense. Perhaps there is a moral in the history of philosophy for teacher education. Philosophers have, by and large, abandoned ambitious metaphysics, grand schemes, and self-assured beliefs in progress, having come to develop a more subtle and tentative stance toward the promises and drawbacks of both philosophy (including science, and theory in general) and common sense, whose petrified habits of mind are, at times, justified by sedimentary wisdom.

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